



STEPHANIE
PLASKOWICZKA

To be the most beautiful
blonde in all Russia:

To have been the cause of a
bloody duel between two mem-
bers of the Russian nobility:

To have won the favors of
Nicholas, Czar of all the Rus-
sias:

To have refused the hand of
a Grand Duke:

To have sent the man she loved
away to the war with only a faint
hope of every seeing him again:

To have won favor because of
her artistic attainments:

And to be less than twenty
years old:

SUCH is the history, briefly told, of Mlle. Stephanie Plaskowiczka, premiere danseuse. Mlle. Plaskowiczka has but recently arrived in America for a tour of the United States and Canada. Though she is here, her thoughts and her heart are far away on the battlefield where her sweet-heart, a lieutenant in the Czar's cavalry, is leading charges day after day. In every city Mlle. Plaskowiczka visits her first concern is to secure newspapers, for she must know how fare the Russian arms. Her emotions are divided, for she ever hopes "her soldier" will make a brilliant record, but she fears that he may give his life for that very record, and she would have him turn aside from danger.

Mlle. Plaskowiczka is a graduate of the Imperial Mariensky Institute—the great Russian training school which gave Pavlova to the world. She entered the school when but a mere child, and was accepted because of her striking blonde beauty rather than for any other reason. But her beauty has been, in a way, a tragic asset.

Blondes—real blondes with golden hair and blue eyes—are rare in Russia. Many Polish women have reddish hair and black or brown eyes. But they cannot be termed real blondes. Mlle. Plaskowiczka is a true blonde as Americans know blondes. She has the fairest of golden hair, and her eyes are cerulean. And thereby hangs the tale of a bloody duel.

Mlle. Plaskowiczka made her debut in the Imperial Ballet at the opera house in Moscow when she was scarcely sixteen years of age. Her striking beauty com-

bined with her exceptional grace as a danseuse made an instant impression with her audience. Her fame spread rapidly, and at last reached the ears of Czar Nicholas himself. She was summoned, by royal command, to appear in Petrograd, which was then known as St. Petersburg.

Czar Nicholas openly showed his admiration of the girl's beauty, and she became the toast of the capital. Wherever she went she was hailed with acclaim. She was courted by men of fashion and wealth, and homage of a very unusual sort was paid to her. But she turned a deaf ear to all. There was a man—"her soldier"—that had all her heart. Not even the blandishments of a Grand Duke, who offered her a castle and a life of ease, could lure her from "her soldier." She most flatly refused the proffer of a morganatic marriage with the nobleman.

But Plaskowiczka's beauty was a magnet which even her "No" could not lessen in attractiveness. Two noblemen—Count Vladimir and the Duke Mikalovitch—refused to take "No" for an answer. They pursued the blonde beauty wherever she went. So insistent were they that she finally consented to being the guest of honor at a supper party after the opera.

Most Beautiful Blonde in Russia and "Her Soldier."

Despite the Fact That
Two Titled Suitors
Fought a Duel for Her
Favor and She Nursed
the Wounded One Back
to Health, Stephanie
Plaskowiczka Rejected
Both and When War
Broke Out Sent Her True
Love Off to Battle.



provided both noblemen attended. She agreed to sit between the two rivals, and she tried to give each a like share of her smiles and attention. It was a most tactless thing for Mlle. Plaskowiczka to bring the rivals together, for men do not like to share the favors of the women they love.

Wine flowed freely. The count made violent love. The duke made more violent love. Stephanie was in a quandary. How it happened even she never could explain, but before she knew what had happened, the duke leaned far over, kissed her lightly on the cheek, and then the trouble began.

The count declared Mlle. Plaskowiczka had been insulted, and thereupon slapped the duke squarely in the mouth.

"Revenge," cried the duke. "I demand satisfaction."

"You shall have it," answered the count. "When?" queried the duke.

"At dawn," replied the count. "My seconds will wait on you."

And so the two rivals for the favor of the blonde beauty repaired to the dueling grounds, each armed with a pistol. Those who had been at the supper party made the spectators of the grim little affaire d'honneur.

Count Vladimir was shot twice, once in the arm and again in the abdomen. He was hurried to a hospital and Mlle. Plaskowiczka went with him. For three months she was constantly at his side, nursing him back to health and strength. It was common report that the beauty's heart had been touched. "She will marry

Count Vladimir," said the gossips. Even Vladimir himself thought so. But the ways of a woman are past finding out.

The day Count Vladimir was discharged from the hospital a well man Mlle. Plaskowiczka gave him his dismissal and said he was never to address her again. Already the volatile young woman had dismissed, with a few curt words, the victor of the duel. Always she thought of and loved "her soldier."

For a time after the duel Mlle. Plaskowiczka lived in seclusion. She even left the Russian capital, following the count's recovery, and went to Paris to appear. In order largely to get away from the attention of the dandies of Petrograd she agreed to come to America with Mlle. Pavlova. When war was declared Mlle. Plaskowiczka was at Mlle. Pavlova's London home, "Ty House," preparing for the forthcoming season. It was only because of the impossibility of getting back to Russia that Mlle. Plaskowiczka did not return and go to the front as a nurse for she wanted to be near "her soldier" in his hour of danger.

One day a message reached Stephanie telling her that the troop to which "her soldier" belonged had been ordered to the front. Mlle. Pavlova and others in Pavlova's company argued for days to prevent Plaskowiczka from going to the front as a Red Cross nurse from England. The real reason for Plaskowiczka's not going is that she can speak very little English, hence she would be practically

useless caring for wounded Englishmen.

"Oh, the cruel, cruel war!" said Mlle. Plaskowiczka in her jargon, a mixture of French, Russian and English, intelligible only to a few of Mlle. Pavlova's company, as she stepped onto the pier when she arrived from Europe. "How I pray it will end."

And then she inquired the way to the Russian cathedral in 96th street, New York.

She went there to pray for the safety of "her soldier."

Cruel war it is indeed! It is cruel enough for those who can sit at home and hope and pray for the safety of the loved ones who are at the front. But for one who is in the position of Mlle. Plaskowiczka it is doubly cruel.

Night after night she is compelled to entertain her audiences. No matter what troubles are on her heart, no matter how fierce the fighting has been in the region where her loved one is, she must glide from the wings of the stage so many times each night with an exuberance in spirit and body and with smiles on her face that give the lie to her real feelings.

Will Mlle. Plaskowiczka complete her American tour—will she have the courage to remain on this side until summer comes again? That is doubtful. The members of the company who know her best say she won't. It is only her beautiful, graceful body which is in America,

they say. Her heart and soul are with "her soldier" in far away Russia. And all the members of the company are sure that if any word comes of injury or death to "her soldier" she will fly to the land of her birth either to nurse him back to life or to lay a wreath on his grave.

Use Wireless Engine in Powder Magazine

THE British admiralty has purchased a wireless locomotive for one of the explosive depots, where absolute safety from fire is of the first importance. The locomotive, which resembles in appearance a miniature railway engine minus the smokestack, is without fire or heating apparatus of any kind. Its reservoir, which is partly filled with water, is charged with high-pressure steam from a boiler placed outside the danger zone. The locomotive can work on one charge of the reservoir for several hours on continuous hauling or for a much longer stand for twelve hours in ordinary open-air temperature, with small loss of steam, and can run back to the charging station under as low a steam pressure as 15 pounds per square inch.

In the trials made under admiralty supervision all the test conditions were surpassed, both as regards insulation, loads handled and periods worked upon one charge of the reservoir. The locomotive is easily handled and acts in exactly the same way as an ordinary steam engine. The rubbing surfaces, such as the brake blocks and buffers, are rendered sparkless by the use of special facings.